

Historic Nickel with Forward-Facing Jefferson Heads into Circulation

January 12, 2006

Washington — Pouring hundreds of shiny, new 2006 nickels from a silver goblet designed by President Thomas Jefferson, officials at the United States Mint launched into circulation today the Nation's first circulating coin that features the image of a United States President facing forward. The Nation's coinage has depicted profiles of presidents for nearly a century. This new image of President Thomas Jefferson is based on a Rembrandt Peale portrait of Jefferson, painted in 1800.

The United States Mint expects to ship approximately a billion of the new five-cent coins (nickels) to the Nation's 12 Federal Reserve banks. It will take several weeks for the 2006 nickels to circulate and to reach most Americans' pockets. The forward-looking Jefferson is expected to grace the five-cent coin for years to come.

The new coin completes the United States Mint's popular Westward Journey Nickel Series™ that commemorates the bicentennials of the Louisiana Purchase and the Lewis and Clark expedition.

"This nickel features a forward-looking President Jefferson who recognized that the Louisiana Purchase and Lewis and Clark expedition would expand our horizons in numerous ways," said United States Mint Acting Director David A. Lebryk. "This is a hopeful, positive image, emblematic of a bright future for our Nation."

The Lincoln cent (penny) of 1909 marked the first time the United States Mint used the image of a President on the Nation's circulating coinage. The image of President Abraham Lincoln, and other Presidents on later coins, is in profile.

The forward-looking 2006 nickel obverse (heads side) was designed by Concord, North Carolina, artist Jamie Franki, who was inspired by the Rembrandt Peale painting of 1800. United States Mint Sculptor-Engraver Donna Weaver sculpted the new nickel obverse. As on the 2005 nickels, the word "Liberty" in Thomas Jefferson's own handwriting has been inscribed on the nickel obverse. Jamie Franki's forward-looking image of Thomas Jefferson was selected from 147 design candidates submitted by the United States Mint sculptor-engravers and artists from throughout the country in the United States Mint's Artistic Infusion Program. Franki also designed the reverse image on the 2005 American Bison nickel.

The United States Mint has titled the new nickel "Return to Monticello" because the familiar image of President Jefferson's stately Virginia home returns to the reverse (tails side) after a two-year (2004 and 2005) absence. This nickel also symbolizes Lewis and Clark's return from their 8,000-mile journey. The 1938 classic rendition of Monticello by Felix Schlag will be more detailed than Americans have seen it in recent years, having been carefully restored by United States Mint Sculptor-Engraver John Mercanti, using Schlag's original work. Over more than 65 years of production, the United States Mint had slightly modified the reverse design for technical reasons.

Bags and rolls of 2006 nickels may be ordered from the United States Mint starting at noon (ET) today at www.usmint.gov or by calling 1-800-USA-MINT (872-6468). Lesson plans about the new 2006 nickel may be downloaded free from the United States Mint website at www.usmint.gov/kids.

A law passed by Congress, and approved by President Bush in April 2003, authorized the redesign of the nickel for the first time since 1938 to commemorate the bicentennials of the Louisiana Purchase and the Lewis and Clark expedition. The United States Mint's Westward Journey Nickel Series was the result, and the 2004 Peace Medal nickel was the first design. It went into circulation in March 2004, and the Keelboat nickel followed in August. In 2005, the United States Mint changed the nickel's obverse for the first time since 1938, incorporating a new profile image of Thomas Jefferson on the obverse and two new designs, the American Bison and Ocean in View images, on the reverse.

Members of the National Endowment for the Arts participated on a United States Mint panel that evaluated the nickel design candidates for all of the Westward Journey Nickel Series coins, including the 2006 obverse. In the case of "Jefferson, 1800," the panel selected the 8 most promising images for the obverse, which then were submitted to the Commission of Fine Arts and the Citizens Coinage Advisory Committee for their review. The Secretary of the Treasury considered the comments and recommendations of these two panels in approving the final design.

To download images of the 2006 “Return to Monticello” nickel, [click here](#)

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Press Inquiries: Office of Corporate Communications (202) 354-7222

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